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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [UK](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: TERRORISM: EGYPTIAN MEDIA THEMES,
JULY 11 TO 17

1. Summary: The Egyptian media continued to comment on the murder of Egyptian envoy to Iraq Ehab Al-Sharif and the London bombings. Some commentators blamed "western double standards" for terrorism. Others pointed towards corruption and "a lack of democracy" as the cause. Some commentators questioned why the Egyptian Government had sent murdered envoy Ehab Al-Sharif to Iraq in the first place; while another accused Egyptians of being disingenuous when referring to the violence in Iraq as "resistance," rather than "terrorism." The media gave wide coverage to the arrest of the Egyptian-born chemist accused of involvement in the London attacks and to Deputy Secretary Zoellick's visit to Egypt to discuss political

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and economic reform. One pro-government newspaper accused D/S Zoellick of attempting "to pressure Egypt on political reforms" by meeting with opposition figures. Renewed violence between Palestinians and Israeli forces dominated media coverage over the weekend, with commentators universally condemning Israeli actions. End summary.

2. London bombing: "Britain is responsible for the attacks in London, because it failed to listen to Egyptian warnings about giving asylum to Islamists," wrote a commentator in pro-government Al-Akhbar (circulation: 800,000) on July 15. A commentator in opposition Al-Wafd (circulation: 50,000) wrote on July 14, "These attacks show that the West is paying for its stupid policies in the Arab world." On July 14, an independent columnist in pro-government Al-Ahram (circulation: 750,000) blamed "western double standards" for terrorism; while an Islamist commentator writing in the same issue asserted that the attacks "will close the doors of education and work opportunities for Muslims in Europe." The Egyptian media covered the arrest of Magdy Nasher, the Egyptian-born chemist accused of playing a role in the London attacks. The July 16 front page of pro-government Al-Gomhouriya (circulation: 500,000) printed the Egyptian Minister of Interior's assertion that Nasher "has no connection with Al-Qaeda." The same day, a commentator in pro-government Al-Ahram (circulation: 750,000) wrote, "It is impossible that a young professor sent to London for his education to serve his nation becomes a terrorist." Also on July 16, Al-Gomhouriya's Editor-in-chief blamed the American and British media for "their ready accusations" against Nasher and "their attempts to prove a link between him and Mohamed Atta before the investigation is finished."

3. Egyptian envoy to Iraq murdered more commentary: On July 16 Egyptian satellite Dream TV's program Al-Haqiqa ("The Truth") featured several guests who spoke about Ehab Al-Sherif's murder. "Our ambassador was sent under U.S. pressure," claimed a People's Assembly member, "to give legitimacy to a fake and illegal Iraqi government." Another commentator contradicted him by stating that Iraq's government was "accepted internationally and is legitimate." An Egyptian who was kidnapped by Sunni insurgents also appeared on the program to claim that his kidnappers "treated me kindly" and blamed Shiite security forces for "treating Sunnis unfairly." A fourth guest, dubbed a "political analyst," claimed, "It's in the best interest of the U.S. that terrorism does not stop in Iraq, so it can use terrorism as a reason to stay," while also charging that the U.S. finances Zargawi. On July 12, Nile TV hosted an Egyptian political writer and analyst who listed "western double standards" and "poverty, corruption, and the lack of democracy" as the causes of the terrorism that led to Ehab Al-Sherif's murder. A columnist in independent daily Nahdet Masr (circulation: 20,000), on July 14, accused Egyptians of failing "to name things for what they are" by not calling the violence in Iraq "terrorism," rather than "resistance."

4. Deputy Secretary Zoellick visit to Egypt: The pro-government media welcomed Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's visit to Egypt by claiming on July 13 that he would "discuss increasing U.S. investment in Egypt" and "work on concluding a free trade agreement." The headline in Al-Ahram on July 15 read, "Egypt to take the lead in political and economic reforms," along with photos of Zoellick meeting with President Mubarak. The front page of

pro-government Akhbar Al-Youm (circulation: 1,000,000) highlighted Zoellick's comments to a journalists roundtable on July 14 that "Egypt's role in the Middle East peace process is key." Independent Nahdet Masr profiled Zoellick on its front page on July 16 under the headline, "Zoellick: The New Reformers in the NDP are Serious About Change; There is No Substitute for International Monitoring to Ensure Honest Elections." Al-Gomhouriya's new Editor-in-chief, Mohamed Ali Ibrahim, criticized Zoellick's July 13 meeting with opposition figures as "an attempt to pressure Egypt on political reforms" and asserted that the U.S. "is seeking a president from the opposition." (For more details on coverage of the Deputy Secretary's visit to Egypt, see septel.)

15. Israel: The lead story in Al-Ahram on July 14 reported on Israel's "re-occupation" of Tulkarem and renewed violence in the Palestinian Territories, with a lead photo of Israeli soldiers "attacking" a home. The same day, all newspapers printed FM Aboul Gheit's comments condemning the Netanya suicide bombing. "Israel is the enemy of life," inveighed the unsigned editorial in Al-Akhbar on July 15. Several commentators lined up against Israel on Dream TV's Al-Haqiqa on July 16. "Israelis hate us," stated one commentator, pointing to negative Israeli press commentary about Egypt, while another commentator claimed that the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) and natural gas agreements were ways of "rewarding the enemy for their brutal and aggressive policies." However, one commentator an NDP member begged that the audience understand "diplomatic protocols" between Egypt and Israel, explaining, "Our relations with Israel, a neighboring country, are as important as those with Libya and Sudan."

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